

oppressive rule under the Russian Empire and USSR, were rewarded with the gift of independence. That is why this week we can proudly stand with our friends in Azerbaijan to celebrate their 103rd Republic Day and share in our collective belief in freedom.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in celebrating Azerbaijan's Republic Day and in recognizing our shared commitment to freedom, democracy, and the principle of self-governance. I would like to share my most heartfelt congratulations on this momentous occasion.

#### HONORING FLORIDA'S THIRD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT'S GOLD STAR FAMILIES

### HON. KAT CAMMACK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 25, 2021*

Mrs. CAMMACK. Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor the service and sacrifice of Army Sergeant Henry Levon Brown. Sgt. Brown was killed in action the 8th of April 2003 south of Baghdad, Iraq. He was the proud husband of Army Specialist JoDona Brown and son of Elm and Rhonda Brown. Sgt. Brown was known to be a quiet and religious man focused on his duty as a soldier and role as a loving husband. He is greatly missed by friends, family, and community members alike. We thank him for his ultimate sacrifice for the freedom of our Nation and all Americans.

I am proud to honor the service and sacrifice of Army Sergeant Ed Santini. Sgt. Santini was killed in action the 17th of March 2007 near Baghdad, Iraq. He was the proud husband of Astrid Santini and father of Nayomi and Valerie. He is greatly missed by friends, family, and community members alike. We thank him for his ultimate sacrifice to our Nation for the freedom of all Americans.

I am proud to honor the service and sacrifice of Sergeant Jeffrey David Smithson. Sgt. Smithson was killed in the line of duty the 11th of December 2013 near St. Augustine, Florida. He was the proud husband of Celeste Ann and father of Madeline, Christian, Jeremy, and Colin. He is greatly missed by friends, family, and community members alike. We thank him for his ultimate sacrifice to our Nation for the freedom of all Americans.

I am proud to honor the service and sacrifice of Major Gene Andrew Redding. Maj. Redding died the 6th of September 2016 near Lawtey, Florida. He was the proud father of Bryson James and Ella Grace. He is greatly missed by friends, family, and community members alike. We thank him for his ultimate sacrifice to our Nation for the freedom of all Americans.

I am proud to honor the service and sacrifice of Army Staff Sergeant John A. Reiners. Ssg. Reiners was killed in action the 13th of February 2010 in Zhari Province, Iraq. He was the proud husband of Casey and father of Lex. He is greatly missed by friends, family, and community members alike. We thank him for his ultimate sacrifice to our Nation for the freedom of all Americans.

I am proud to honor the service and sacrifice of Army Captain Leroy Campbell. Cpt. Campbell was killed in the line of duty the

17th of September 1956 in California. He was the proud father of Ms. Lynn Vernon. He is greatly missed by friends, family, and community members alike. We thank him for his ultimate sacrifice to our Nation for the freedom of all Americans.

I am proud to honor the service and sacrifice of Private First Class Donald "Wayne" Vincent. Pfc. Vincent was killed in action the 25th of July 2009 in the Helmand Province, Afghanistan. He was the proud son of Lee and Betty Sue of Gainesville, Florida. He is greatly missed by friends, family, and community members alike. We thank him for his ultimate sacrifice to our Nation for the freedom of all Americans.

I am proud to honor the service and sacrifice of Lance Corporal Philip Paul Clark. LCpl. Clark was killed in action the 18th of May 2010 in the Helmand Province, Afghanistan. He was the proud husband of Ashton Guenther and son of Mike and Tammy Clark of Gainesville, Florida. He is greatly missed by friends, family, and community members alike. We thank him for his ultimate sacrifice to our Nation for the freedom of all Americans.

#### REMEMBERING REV. E. BAXTER MORRIS

### HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 25, 2021*

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the late Rev. E. Baxter Morris, who passed away on May 2. His funeral took place on Saturday, May 15, at the church that he led for nearly half a century. Many of us in this House knew Rev. Morris as a gracious host when we traveled to Montgomery, Alabama, on the annual Faith and Politics Institute Civil Rights Pilgrimage. He and his congregants at the historic First Baptist Church welcomed us with a very moving service followed by a home-cooked meal that made us feel like we were part of their community. I spoke with him at those lunches and, like so many others, came to see his wisdom, patience, and grace. I know that Rev. Morris, who was the congregation's longest-serving pastor, will be deeply missed by all who knew him and worshipped with him.

One of my most cherished memories of congressional pilgrimages to the First Baptist Church and other now-sacred places is sharing the experience with my dear friend John Lewis. John would remind us of the time in youth when he helped organize and lead the Freedom Rides. That effort began 60 years ago this spring. In late May 1961, around 1,500 community members, Freedom Riders, and civil rights activists had gathered to worship at First Baptist Church, when they were besieged by a mob of as many as 3,000 white supremacists. Joining John Lewis inside were Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Fred Shuttlesworth, Diane Nash, James Farmer, and the Rev. Ralph Abernathy, who was the senior pastor of the church at that time. It took a historic intervention by President John F. Kennedy and Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, which involved calling out the Alabama National Guard, to break that siege and save the lives of those inside. That incident, known now to history as the First Baptist Church Siege,

was a pivotal moment in the effort to desegregate public transportation across the South.

Thus when Rev. Morris became the senior pastor of First Baptist Church in 1972, it already had a storied history. He did his utmost to preserve that history and ensure that his congregants and visitors alike never forgot the important role that First Baptist Church played in the march for freedom, equality, and civil rights in our country. Indeed, at the lunches I attended with John and other Members of Congress, Rev. Morris would remind us that his church had been founded shortly after emancipation by those who had endured slavery. When a fire destroyed their original church building, the congregants banded together to build the current structure, donating bricks for its construction. For that reason, it is also known as the Brick-a-Day Church.

Rev. Morris understood that his pastoral work reached far beyond the walls of First Baptist Church. He regularly volunteered his time as a mentor throughout the Montgomery community, and he served as Chaplain for the Montgomery Police Department for more than two decades. The Operation Good Shepherd program organized with other religious leaders from across the city endeavors to help law enforcement de-escalate encounters with residents and promote cooperation instead of confrontation. I know that his presence and contributions will be greatly missed across Montgomery and its region.

I join in offering my condolences to Rev. Morris' wife, Rebbe, and their family as well as the entire First Baptist Church community. I will never forget the wisdom he shared with us or his warm and kind welcome and the wonderful meals we had over the years fixed by the members of First Baptist.

Now, he and John and Martin and Ralph and so many other great men and women of justice and courage march on together in eternal peace.

#### REMEMBERING AND HONORING JIM WALTERS

### HON. EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 25, 2021*

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to remember and honor Jim Walters who passed away on February 22nd at the age of 83.

Throughout his life, Jim was no stranger to making an impact and improving the lives of others. Jim moved to Gainesville, Georgia in 1971 where he raised his family and became a pillar of philanthropy and generosity in this community.

He was a pioneer in the Georgia Industrial Loan Association, owning many loan offices and businesses throughout the state and country.

Through his success, Jim gave back to his community in countless ways.

He served on Georgia's Board of Natural Resources, the Georgia Ports Authority, and 40 different nonprofit organizations.

He mentored, encouraged, supported and inspired all who met him, and Georgia will be forever touched by his legacy.

My thoughts and prayers are with his family, friends, and all who knew him during this most difficult time.